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M. J. M. B. FORTUNY Y CARBO

ETCHING: ARAB MOURNING THE DEATH OF HIS FRIEND

THE PRINT COLLECTION

EXTRACTS FROM A PAPER BY S. L. SHERER

READ AT THE MUSEUM, NOVEMBER 26, 1914

DOCTOR WILHELM BODE, Director of Germany's great institution, the Berlin Museum, after a visit to America wrote: "What the museums yonder should strive for are systematically assembled collections of engravings, wherein Boston alone has made a beginning. The New York Public Library collects only modern engravings and etchings; the Fogg Art Museum at Cambridge has worthy groups of old engravings, but lacks funds for their systematic augmentation."

Since this was written there has been a marked interest in prints on the part of our museums, and to-day Chicago possesses the most complete collection of Meryon and Zorn. These will soon be supplemented by the bequest of the Buckingham collection valued at more than \$200,000.00. At Detroit, Pittsburg and Brooklyn collections have been started, and at Philadelphia the Phillips collection formed forty years ago is being placed in order for exhibition. Since 1891 Buffalo has had a small, but comprehensive collection of old prints and what is probably the best collection of Seymour Haden to be found in this country.

In line with the policy of these institutions, the City Art Museum is endeavoring to assemble a small, but select collection of prints which

will exemplify the art of engraving from the earliest times to the present day by representative examples of the most representative engravers of all schools and in all mediums. The collection already covers a considerable range and the foundation has been laid for a department which may be extended indefinitely, and yet be of immediate service.

Commencing with the early Italian school, we have "Christ Between St. Andrew and Longinus," one of the seven authentic engravings of Mantegna—who may be said to be the founder of the school, although the origin of engraving on metal may be traced to those sulphur impressions taken by goldsmiths to prove their work and known as niello; Guilo Campagnola's famous plate of "St. John the Baptist Holding a Cup," and a small but fine example of Marc Antonio who engraved many of Raphael's drawings under the eye of the master.

Of the German school we have as yet no prints prior to the time of Durer, whose work is still unsurpassed after the lapse of four hundred years; of his followers the "Little Masters," Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham, Pencz, Altdorfer, Aldegrever, Brosamer and Binck we have no less than twenty-six plates which reflect the spirit of their age.

The Flemish and Dutch schools of etching are represented by Van Dyke, Rembrandt, Van Ostade, Both, Waterloo, Berchem and Everdingen, and in line engraving by Lucas Van Leyden, Cornelius Visscher, Jan Muller and Van Dallen.

In Claude Lorrain and Callot the early school of etching in France is represented, and of the modern revival we have Jacque, Millet, Rousseau, Daubigny, Bracquemond, Lalanne, Jacquemart, Appian, Rajon, Buhot, Lepere, Legros and Meryon.

Portrait engraving in France reached its highest development during the last half of the seventeenth century and it can be studied here in important plates by Mellan, Morin, Edelinck, and Nanteuil, the greatest master of the French school.

It is interesting to compare these portraits in line with those etched in our day by Rajon and Legros, and especially with the incisive portrait of Renan, a plate etched in an hour, and one that has been said to epitomize the whole art of Zorn.

Mezzotint engraving, although of German origin, reached its highest development in England, and is especially adapted to the translation of portraits. In the Museum collection are examples of John Smith, Valentine Green, Charles Turner, Richard Earlom, Wm. Pether and John Raphael Smith. How well the same process may be used in interpreting the spirit of landscape may be seen in the plates of

Turner's "Liber Studiorum" and the present day master of the art, Sir Frank Short.

Line engraving for a time was the only means of familiarizing people with the work of great painters. Of those who attained the most complete mastery of the burin were Faithorne, Strange, Sharp and Woollett, the last three represented by engravings characteristic of their best work.

It has not been possible as yet to include much of the work of contemporary etchers as it is deemed advisable to first complete the framework of an historical collection. We have a goodly collection of the work of Pennell, Mielatz and Smillie, the latter presented by the sons of the artist; we have, however, departed from our schedule to secure several of the plates usually accounted the masterpieces of Herman A. Webster, and Donald Shaw McLaughlin. The collection of line engravings in the hallway was bequeathed by Prof. Ives and comprises impressions from the original plates preserved in the Chalcographie of the Louvre. The collection of Arundel prints is the property of Washington University.

It has seemed desirable to preserve proofs of some of the more important wood engravings of the American School. It is, we believe, generally admitted that in this particular phase of the graphic arts, Timothy Cole, Henry Wolff, Gustave Kruell, Elbridge Kingsley, W. B. Closson and Thos. Johnson carried the art to its highest development. Of great interest in this relation are the eight wood blocks of Timothy Cole and some of the engraving tools used by him. Also two of the original wood blocks engraved by the first American wood engraver, Dr. Alexander Anderson.

It is the desire of the Director to make the Print Collection educational in nature and to that end it will be his endeavor to collect original plates showing the various processes of engraving, in line, stipple, etching, dry point, soft ground etching, aquatint, wood engraving and lithography—exhibiting these plates with impressions of same, together with the tools used in their making, and a printed description of each process. When this is accomplished it will be possible to study the graphic arts more intelligently and to here inspect representative examples of the work of all the master etchers and engravers whose achievement constitutes standards of excellence to which reference can be made and appeal taken.